

What is claimed is:

1. An electronic coupon method employed in a network system having a purchaser terminal, a marketing server, and a network via which said purchaser terminal and said marketing server are mutually connected, whereby said marketing server manages product information for a marketed product and an electronic coupon including encrypted discount information regarding said product, establishing a relationship of correspondence therebetween and, when there is a request to obtain said electronic coupon for a certain product from a purchaser terminal, sends said requested electronic coupon to said purchaser terminal which originated said request, and wherein

said purchaser terminal displays said electronic coupon sent from said marketing server and, said user decrypts said discount information encrypted in said electronic coupon by following use's decryption instructions, and displays said information on a display unit.

2. An electronic coupon method employed in a network system having a purchaser terminal, a marketing server, and a network via which said purchaser terminal and said marketing server are mutually connected, whereby

said marketing server manages product information for a marketed product and electronic coupons including encrypted discount information regarding said product, establishing a relationship of correspondence therebetween,

said purchaser terminal displays on its own display unit product information managed by said marketing server and obtained via said network, and sends to said marketing server a request to obtain an electronic coupon corresponding to a product selected by an user viewing said display unit,

said marketing server sends said requested electronic coupon to said purchaser terminal which originated said request, in accordance with said request to obtain said electronic coupon sent from said purchaser terminal,

said purchaser terminal displays an electronic coupon sent from said marketing server on said display unit, decrypts discount information encrypted within said electronic coupon in accordance with user decryption instructions and display it on said display unit, and sends order information to said marketing server to the effect that said user will purchase said selected product, in accordance with user ordering instructions, with using said electronic coupon, and

said marketing server calculates a discount price based on discount information in said electronic coupon indicated for use by said order information sent from said purchaser terminal, and processes payment using said discount price.

3. An electronic coupon system according to claim 2, wherein said system is further provided with an order-receiving terminal connected to said marketing server via said network, whereby

said purchaser terminal sends product information regarding a marketed product and an electronic coupon including encrypted discount information to said marketing server, and

5        said marketing server manages said product information for said product sent from said purchaser terminal, and electronic coupon, establishing a relationship of correspondence therebetween.

4. An electronic coupon system according to claim  
10    2 ,wherein

      said purchaser terminal, in accordance with an operation by a user wishing to become a member, sends membership application information including user information identifying said user to said marketing  
15    server, and

      said marketing server, when membership application information is sent from said purchaser terminal, records said member information identifying said applying user into a member information storage section, and sends a  
20    decryption key for decrypting discount information included in an electronic coupon to said purchaser terminal that sent said membership application.

5. An electronic coupon system according to claim  
      4, wherein

25        said order information includes an electronic coupon to be used, and

      said marketing server, when order information is sent from said purchaser terminal, checks validity of said electronic coupon included in said order information

and, in a case in which said electronic coupon is not valid, rejects said order information and stores use of an invalid electronic coupon as historical information of said user who sent said order information.

5           6. An electronic coupon system according to claim 5, wherein

said marketing server rejects order information from anyone but a user for whom member information has been registered in said member information storage section.

10           7. An electronic coupon system according to claim 6, wherein said user is either an individual user or a corporate user.

15           8. An electronic coupon system according to claim 1, wherein said discount information included in said electronic coupon is encrypted by means of an electronic watermark.

20           9. An electronic coupon system according to claim 1, wherein said discount information is a discount rate or a discount price.

10           10. An electronic coupon system according to claim 1, wherein said network is the Internet.

25           11. An electronic coupon system in a network system having a purchaser terminal, a marketing server, and a network via which said purchaser terminal and said marketing server are mutually connected, whereby

said marketing server manages product information for a marketed product and electronic coupons including encrypted discount information regarding said product,

establishing a relationship of correspondence therebetween, and sends said electronic coupon to said purchaser terminal in accordance with said request to obtain the same when said request to obtain said electronic coupon is sent thereto from said purchaser terminal, and when an order information had sent from said purchaser terminal, calculates a discount price based on discount information in said electronic coupon indicated for use by said order, and processes payment using said discount price.

said purchaser terminal obtains product information managed by said marketing server via said network and displays on its own display unit, and sends to said marketing server a request to obtain an electronic coupon corresponding to a product selected by said user viewing said display unit, and when said electronic coupon is sent from said marketing server displays an electronic coupon sent from said marketing server on said display unit, when said user issues decryption instruction, decrypts and displays on said display unit discount information encrypted within said electronic coupon, and sends order information to said marketing server when said user issues said purchase order, to the effect that said user will purchase said selected product with using said electronic coupon.

12, An electronic coupon system according to claim 11, wherein

said marketing server comprises

a product information controlling means, which controls product information and an encrypted electronic coupon corresponding to said product information with a relationship of correspondence therebetween,

5 a product information sending means which, when a product information obtaining request is sent from said purchaser terminal sends said product information to said purchaser terminal in accordance with said obtaining request,

10 an electronic coupon sending means, which, when a electronic coupon obtaining request is send from said purchaser terminal, sends an electronic coupon to said purchaser terminal in accordance with said obtaining request,

15 and an order receiving means, which, when order information is sent from said purchaser terminal, calculates a discount price based on discount information in said electronic coupon indicated by a user by means of said order information, and performs settlement of payment, using said discount price,

20 and wherein said purchaser terminal comprises

a product information obtaining means, which sends a product information obtaining request to said marketing server via said network and displays product information sent from said marketing server in response to said product information obtaining request on its own display unit,

25 an electronic coupon obtaining means, which sends to said marketing server an electronic coupon obtaining

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request corresponding to a product selected by a user of products for which product information is displayed on said display unit, and displays an electronic coupon send from said marketing server in response to said electronic coupon obtaining request on said display unit,

an electronic coupon decrypting means, which when a user issues an instruction to decrypt, decrypts and displays on said display unit discount information encrypted in said electronic coupon, and

an ordering means, which, when there is an ordering instruction by a user, sends order information to the effect that said user will purchase said selected product using said electronic coupon.

13. An electronic coupon system according to claim 12, further comprising an order-receiving terminal, which comprises a product information sending means, which sends to said marketing server via said network product information for a marketed product and an electronic coupon including encrypted discount information for said product, and wherein

said product information controlling means controls said product information for said product and said associated electronic coupon sent from said order-receiving terminal with a relationship of correspondence therebetween.

14. An electronic coupon system according to claim 13, wherein said purchaser terminal comprises a membership application means, which, in accordance with an operation of a user desiring to become a member, sends

membership application information including user information that identifies said user to the marketing server, and manages a decryption key sent from the marketing server in response to the membership application information, and wherein

said marketing server comprises a member control means, which, when membership application information is sent from the purchaser terminal, records member information identifying said applying user into a member information storage section, and sends to said purchaser terminal that sent said membership application information a decryption key for decrypting discount information included in an electronic coupon.

15. An electronic coupon system according to claim 14, wherein

said order information includes a electronic coupon to be used and wherein

said order-receiving terminal, when order information is sent from said purchaser terminal, checks validity of said electronic coupon included in said order information, and, in a case in which said electronic coupon is not valid, rejects said order information and records the use of an invalid electronic coupon as historical information of the sending user.

16. An electronic coupon system according to claim 15, wherein said order receiving means is configured so as to reject order information sent from a user unless member information of the user is registered in said member information storage section.



17. An electronic coupon system according to claim 16, wherein said user is either an individual user or a corporate user.

18. An electronic coupon system according to claim 11, wherein said discount information included in said electronic coupon is encrypted by means of an electronic watermark.

19. An electronic coupon system according to claim 11, wherein said discount information is a discount rate or a discount price.

20. An electronic coupon system according to claim 11, wherein said network is the Internet.

21. A marketing server comprising:

a product information controlling means, which controls product information and an encrypted electronic coupon including discount information corresponding to said product with a relationship of correspondence therebetween,

a product information sending means, which, when a product information obtaining request is sent from a purchaser terminal sends said product information to said purchaser terminal in accordance with said obtaining request;

an electronic coupon sending means, which, when a electronic coupon obtaining request is send from said purchaser terminal, sends an electronic coupon to said purchaser terminal in accordance with said obtaining request; and

an order receiving means, which, when order information is sent from said purchaser terminal, calculates a discount price based on discount information in said electronic coupon indicated by a user by means of  
 5 said order information, and performs settlement of payment, using said discount price.

22. A purchaser terminal comprising:

a product information obtaining means, which sends a product information obtaining request to a marketing server via a network and displays product information sent from said marketing server in response to said product information obtaining request on its own display unit;  
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an electronic coupon obtaining means, which sends to said marketing server an electronic coupon obtaining request corresponding to a product selected by a user of products for which product information is displayed on said display unit, and displays an electronic coupon sent from said marketing server in response to said electronic coupon obtaining request on said display unit;  
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an electronic coupon decrypting means, which when a user issues an instruction to decrypt, decrypts and displays on said display unit discount information encrypted in said electronic coupon; and

an ordering means, which, when there is an ordering instruction by said user, sends order information to said marketing server to effect that said user will purchase said selected product using said electronic coupon.  
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23. An order-receiving terminal comprising:

a product information sending means, which sends to said marketing server via said network product information for a marketed product and an electronic coupon including encrypted discount information for said product.

24. A computer program for implementing an electronic coupon system in a network system having a computer for use as a purchaser terminal, a computer for use as a marketing server, and a network connecting said computers together, said computer program causing said marketing server computer to function as

a product information controlling means, which controls product information and an encrypted electronic coupon corresponding to said product information with a relationship of correspondence therebetween,

a product information sending means, which, when a product information obtaining request is sent from a computer for a purchaser terminal sends said product information to said computer for said purchaser terminal in accordance with said obtaining request;

an electronic coupon sending means, which, when a electronic coupon obtaining request is send from said computer for said purchaser terminal, sends an electronic coupon to said computer for said purchaser terminal in accordance with said obtaining request; and

an order receiving means, which, when order information is sent from a computer for said purchaser terminal, calculates a discount price based on discount information in said electronic coupon indicated by a user

by means of said order information, and performs settlement of payment, using said discount price,

and causing the purchaser terminal computer to function as

5 a product information obtaining means, which sends a product information obtaining request to a computer for a marketing server via a network and displays product information sent from said computer in response to said product information obtaining request on its own display  
10 unit;

an electronic coupon obtaining means, which sends to a computer for said marketing server an electronic coupon obtaining request corresponding to a product selected by a user of products for which product information is  
15 displayed on said display unit, and displays an electronic coupon sent from said marketing server in response to said electronic coupon obtaining request on said display unit;

an electronic coupon decrypting means, which when a  
20 user issues an instruction to decrypt, decrypts and displays on said display unit discount information encrypted in said electronic coupon; and as

an ordering means, which, when there is an ordering instruction by said user, sends order information to  
25 effect that said user will purchase said selected product using said electronic coupon.